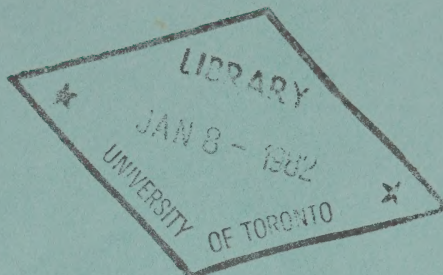


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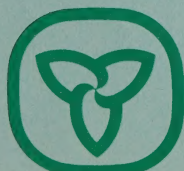
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Parole

DEPOSITORY LIBRARY MATERIAL

When John S. was sentenced to 14 months in a correctional facility, he knew he might be eligible for parole. Because he wanted to return to his family as soon as possible, John asked his parole officer to explain exactly what parole meant and how he could qualify.



Ontario

Ministry of
Correctional
Services

Honourable Nicholas G. Leluk,
Minister

Glenn R. Thompson,
Deputy Minister

THE SENTENCED INMATE

John S. arrived at a provincial correctional institution with eight other men who had been sentenced on the same day.

The trip to the institution was unsettling. All the men had been given sentences ranging from twelve to eighteen months and none of them was looking forward to being shut away.

The man next to John tried to start a conversation, but John was wondering how his wife was going to explain his long absence to his two young children.

He'd been locked up before, but only for a few weeks at a time. Now his traveling companion was telling him he'd "hit the big time," and it depressed him.

He knew about parole, that it would get him out sooner, but he had no idea how it worked or how to go about getting it.

WHAT PAROLE MEANS

Parole is a means of releasing an offender from prison under supervision before the date originally set by the judge. It could be called 'time off for good behavior,' but it involves much more than that, as John soon found out.

It is an inmate's right to request a parole, but getting it is a privilege for which the inmate must work.

John was assigned to a parole officer, who explained that to be eligible for parole, John would have to look at his past behavior and consider how he was going to make positive changes in his way of life. He must have a place to live and, if possible, a job to go to before he would be considered for parole.

The parole officer told him that if he could meet these requirements set by the Ontario Board of Parole, he would stand a good chance of being accepted at his parole hearing.

John found out that he would be eligible for release on parole after serving one-third of his sentence, and that he would automatically be assigned a date for a hearing during the month before he became eligible.

WORKING TOWARDS PAROLE

When John told one of the correctional officers who was on

duty in his living unit that he wanted a parole, the officer gave him the same advice as the parole officer had. Stay out of trouble, work hard, and make constructive plans for his future.

John wanted to start a sign-painting business of his own when he got out. He had been fairly good at it in a previous job and was sure he could make a success of a business.

"First of all," the correctional officer advised, "apply for work in the paint shop. That way you'll be working at the trade you want to continue in and the shop instructor can give you a recommendation."

That sounded good to John, but then the correctional officer advised him to forget about a business until he was back on the street and had finished his parole.

"The Board is looking for concrete plans," the officer told him. "Not some dream that might cause you to commit another crime if it doesn't work out. Line up a job and stick to it until you complete your parole."

John at first did not want to accept this advice. However, as he thought about it for a few days and heard other inmates discussing their parole plans, he knew he had no choice. He even began to realize he'd been given good advice.

THE PAROLE BOARD HEARING

John was extremely nervous when he was called in before the Parole Board.

The questions were mostly what he had been told to expect, but he felt anxious and forgot some of the complicated answers he had prepared. The answers he gave sounded too simple.

Yes, he worked in the paint shop.

Apparently the instructor there had spoken well of him.

Yes, his wife was willing to take him back.

Yes, he had a job to go to.

Yes, he planned to stay out of further trouble.

John did his best to explain how he came to break the law this time and the things he planned to do to stay out of trouble.

He couldn't tell from the faces around the table what the Board members were thinking.

Finally, he was asked to wait outside the room until the Board made a decision.

And then... "The Board has decided to grant you parole at this time," he was told.

He'd made it.

"But if at any time you break the conditions of your parole," he was told, "you will be returned to the institution to complete the remainder of your sentence."

John was given, in writing, his parole date and the special conditions that applied to him. He knew he would have some difficult times.

BACK IN THE COMMUNITY

He must report to his parole officer regularly, and work closely with him, obeying the rules the officer set out for him. He must also report monthly to the local police. He must not associate with other offenders.

He could not leave the local area without permission from his parole officer.

Some of the rules of parole apply on a selective basis. For instance, a parolee with a drinking problem will be restricted in the consumption of alcohol. A parolee may be ordered to stay away from specific locations such as pool rooms or shopping plazas if he and his friends are known for gathering there.

If an inmate has shown indications of being irresponsible in the use of firearms, he will be prohibited from owning or using them.

The regular discussions with his officer helped John to get through his time on parole. With the officer's encouragement John's self-confidence grew and the possibility of owning his own business became a good possibility.